(b) whether it is a fact that except for the destitutes, the rest of the population should be linked to some contributing pension-cum-health-cum-shelter fund; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) It is understood that a two day workshop was organized by Help age India, a Non-Governmental Organization, on 3rd and 4th February, 2000 at New Delhi. In this workshop, Council for Economic and Social Research (CESR) presented a paper titled 'An approach to a security net for the Aged'. The recommendations of the workshop and the paper presented there were not sent to this Ministry.

(b) and (c) The population of Older Persons in India which was 56.7 million in 1991 is expected to grow to over 76 million in the year 2001 and 137 million by 2021. The proportion of the population aged 60 years and above was 5.1% of the total population in 1901, this rose to 5.4% in 1951 and is projected to be 7.7% by the year 2001. The trend clearly reveals that Ageing will become a major social challenge in the future and vast resources will be required towards the support, care and treatment of older persons. Having realized this, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment had commissioned, in August, 1998, a project OASIS (and acronym for Old Age Social and Income Security) and nominated an eight member Expert Committee, headed by Dr. S.A. Dave, former Chairman, Unit Trust of India, to comprehensively examine policy questions connected with old age income security in India. The Committee in its Report, submitted to the Government in January, 2000, has recommended a voluntary pension system whereby every young worker may build up enough savings during his/her working life which could serve as a shield against poverty during old age. Government has not yet taken a final view on these recommendations.

Granting Rights and Privileges Under Disablities Act, 1995

2552. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to grant certain rights and privileges to persons falling under the purview of Disabilities Act, 1995;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether the handicapped persons comprise five to six per cent of the total population;

(d) whether Government would have any specific data on the handicapped population in the general census to be undertaken in 2001; and

(e) if not, what are Government's plans to have the exact number of handicapped persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) and (b) A statement is enclosed (*see* below).

(c) According to sample survey conducted by the National Sample Survey in 1991 on visual, hearing, speech and locomotor disabilities, it was estimated that about 1.9 per cent of the population of the country were disabled. Another sample survey was conducted in 1991 for persons with delayed mental development up-to the age of 14. This survey estimated that about 3 per cent suffer from delayed mental development. The number of leprosy affected persons is estimated to be about 4 million of whom a fifth are children. Hence, on an average, 5% of population is estimated to be suffering from some kind of disability or other.

(d) and (e) The Government has always been concerned about collecting accurate data on the number of disabled persons in the country. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment have taken up the issue of collection of disability data through the 2001 Census from 1997 onwards with the concerned authorities. The Ministry have also offered to provide training to enumerators to be used for this purpose. However, in view of the technical difficulties in collecting accurate disability data in the 1981 Census, the Registrar General & Census Commissioner as well as the Ministry of Home Affairs took the view that Census is not the right medium for collecting reliable data on disability. However, the Department of Statistics has been requested to direct National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) to undertake a comprehensive sample survey to collect data on the incidence of disability as was done earlier in 1991 and the issue of including disability related data in the Census of 2001 has also been further taken up with the authority concerned.

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The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, enacted and enforced from Feb., 1996 is an important landmark in Government of India's efforts to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and their full participation in nation-building. It provides for both preventive and promotional aspects of rehabilitation like education, employment and vocational training, job reservation, research and manpower development, creation of barrier-free environment, rehabilitation for persons with disability, unemployment allowance for the disabled, special insurance scheme for disabled employees and establishment of homes for persons with severe disability etc.

II. The implementation of the provisions of the Act requires a multi-sectoral collaborative approach, of all Ministries of the Central Government, the State Governments and other appropriate authorities. They have all been requested to take necessary action expeditiously. The following Actions have been taken to implement various provisions of the Act :

(1) The National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation has been operationalised with effect from 24-10-97 to support entrepreneurial activity by the disabled.

(2) Notification of Central Co-ordination Committee as per Section 3 of the Act. The Committee has undertaken two meetings so far.

(3) Central Executive Committee has been notified. The Committee took four meetings so far to review the progress of implementation of the Act.

(4) The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has been appointed and he has assumed the office w.e.f. 1-9-98.

(5) Five Core Groups of experts and relevant Ministries have been set up to make recommendations and formulate schemes to give effect to various provisions of the Act.

(6) Rules under section 73(1) and (2) have been notified.

(7) The National Fund for People with Disabilities, which was set up under the Charitable Endowment Act 1890 on 11-8-1983, has been activated and assistance has been sanctioned to non-government agencies. So far, 17 Projects have been sanctioned under the Scheme.

(8) A Scheme, namely, Viklang Bandhu has been formulated to provide training to disabled volunteers. The National Institutes and Regional Rehabilitation Training Centres have so far trained a number of Viklang Bandhus.

(9) A Bill for setting up a National Trust for the welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities has been passed to provide support to those vulnerable categories and their families.

(10) The Rehabilitation Council of India, which is statutory body for standardisation and training of rehabilitation professional, recognition of training institutions and registration of professionals, has recently taken up a plan for man-power in disability rehabilitation throughout the country. Funds have been allocated to RCI for this purpose.

(11) More State Governments have constituted State Coordination Committee and State Executive Committee and have appointed Commisioner for persons with Disabilities, to redress the grievances of the disabled persons.

(12) A Conference of State Secretaries, in-charge of persons with disabilities was held on 14-15, Feb., 2000 at New Delhi to discuss the implementation of the Act. A Workshop of State Education Secretaries and State Labour Secretaries was also held at New Delhi to sensitise the State officials and to monitor the progress of implementation of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

(13) An Inter-ministerial Group has been constituted to monitor the progress made by the Central Ministries who have specific obligations under the Act.

(14) Two Schemes are being implemented for providing support to non-government agencies working for various programmes for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

(15) In consonance with the policy of providing a complete package of welfare services to the physically, mentally, hearing and visually handicapped individuals and groups and in order to effectively deal with the multidimensional problems of the handicapped population, the Ministry of SJ&E has established six National/ Apex Institutes, each working in a specific area of disability. These institutes are apex-level organisations in the field of education, training, vocational guidance, counselling, research, rehabilitation and development of suitable service modules for the disabled.

(16) The Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), Kanpur was established in November, 1972 as a Public Sector Company with the main objective of developing and manufacturing standard aids and appliances for the disabled persons and to make them available at reasonable prices to.

Inability of IRCC to carry out suggestions by NCSC & ST

2553. SHRI GANDHI AZAD : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question 59 given in the Rajya Sabha on 28th Feb., 2000 and state the reasons for expressing inability by IRCC to carry out Commission's suggestions made in letter dated 29th January, 1998 and 22nd January, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : The Commission's suggestions relate to the promotion of Shri Anil Kumar, Senior Manager (P) and of Shri Phool Chand, Deputy Manager (P). These fall within Group A, where no reservation for SC/ST is applicable. After 1993, no further promotions were effected in IRCC in any cadre and the Board, in view of the Government decision to close down the Corporation, has decided not to make any promotion till further orders.

As regards seniority and financial benefits to these SC/ST officers are concerned, the matter was placed before Board of Director of IRCC on 26th June, 1999. After detailed consideration of the rules and regulations on the